

## REGION 6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**TOPIC:** Explo Systems Site Status

**DATE:** November 21, 2013

**CONTACT:** P. Delgado/G. Malone/C. Brown

**PURPOSE/ACTION NEEDED:** Remediation/Stabilization of the Explo Site by PRPs

**DEADLINE DATE:** Agreements need to be in place by December 31, 2013, to meet Army Explosive Safety Board (ESB) Recommendations for Stability

**ISSUE:** Action to remedy or stabilize explosive materials stored in 97 magazines at the Explo Site/Camp Minden, LA needs to commence in January 2014, to meet recommendations by the US Army Explosive Safety Board (ESB). A June 20, 2013, report from the ESB cited concerns about the long term stability and safety of the explosive materials in the magazines and recommended open burn/open detonation (OB/OD) of the materials. Based on the past history of explosions at the site and the timing concerns expressed by the ESB, the EPA informed all parties that agreements were needed in December 2013, and work needed to be initiated in January 2014, and completed by December 2014. The EPA informed all parties that it preferred to reach agreement with the parties to perform the work but would pursue all of its enforcement authorities under CERCLA and RCRA to get the work performed within the critical time period.

**BACKGROUND:** Explo Systems in Camp Minden occupies a portion of the Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant; a remediated Superfund site now owned by the Louisiana Military Department (LMD). When Louisiana State Police (LSP) investigated an explosion at the site, on October 15, 2012, they found 10 million lbs. of explosive materials/M6 Propellant stored in containers of various sizes scattered along roadways and open areas around the site in addition to a similar amount of these materials in magazines. On November 27, 2012, the LSP served a warrant to Explo and ordered them to store unsecured explosives in magazines to reduce the threat to the public due to risk of explosion of material. The neighboring community of Doyline was evacuated from November 30 to December 7, 2012, and all non-essential personnel and operations at Camp Minden were evacuated or shut down including Youth Challenge Program School and Webster Parish Prison. All were allowed to return once sufficient explosive materials were stored in magazines to reduce the minimum safe zone. All of the previously unsecured explosive materials were secured in magazines by mid-May 2013.

Over the past year, the EPA, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, and the US Army have provided technical assistance to the LSP and LMD to identify long term cleanup approaches. To date these efforts have been unsuccessful. At the request of LMD, a team from the Army ESB conducted a safety assessment on April 2-3, 2013, and May 7-9, 2013, of all the explosive hazards associated with the Explo facility including the storage magazines. From May 7-9, an eight-member team returned and conducted a safety assessment of all the explosive hazards associated with the Explo facility including the storage magazines. The ESB issued two reports, first on April 18, 2013, and the second on June 20, 2013, summarizing its findings to LMD. During a meeting on August 1, 2013, that was attended by all parties either in person or by phone, members of the ESB expressed concerns that the likelihood of a magazine explosion would increase within 2 years. On August 12, 2013, Explo filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. On September 6, 2013, the Louisiana Governor declared the site a state of emergency.

**CURRENT STATUS:** A total of 97 magazines at Camp Minden are filled to capacity with approximately 18 million lbs. of M6 Propellant and other explosive materials. In addition to the 18 million lbs. of explosives stored at Camp Minden, Explo currently owns 3 million lbs. of M6 Propellant stored at Highland Industrial Park in Camden, AR, in magazines rented by Austin Powder Company. On August 28, 2013, Region 6 referred this case to the Department of Justice for the filing of a proof of claim. On September 30, 2013, the Bankruptcy Court transferred title and ownership of the M6 Propellant and other explosives stored at Camp Minden, LA., to the LMD. Commencing in mid-August through October 2013,



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Region 6 notified Explo Systems, Louisiana National Guard (LNG), the US Army, Alliant Techsystems, Inc., and General Dynamics that it considered them Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) at the site and offered to negotiate administrative orders to conduct removal work needed at the Site. LNG has indicated that it does not have funds to conduct the cleanup, but will cooperate. Although the Army has been aware of the ongoing discussions, it has only recently received formal notice that the EPA considers it a PRP and that the EPA intends to pursue enforcement under RCRA and CERCLA. The Army may participate more actively now that it has received formal notice. No agreements have been reached at this time.

**NEXT STEPS:** Based upon the threat of another explosion and potential harm to human health and the environment, the Region's goal is to negotiate and finalize Administrative Orders on Consent with the PRPs to perform work starting in January 2014. If no agreement can be reached with the PRPs, the Region will pursue its enforcement authorities under both RCRA and CERCLA.



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